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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/ELA, AF/E, PM/PPA FOR GLANCY, PM/PPA FOR
FOSTER , PM/PPA FOR HOPKINS

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TAGS: KCRM EWWT PGOV USUN SO EG

SUBJECT: EGYPT TO JOIN CONTACT GROUP ON SOMALI PIRACY

REF: STATE 133199

Classified By: Ambassador Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) On December 28, Assistant Foreign Minister Wafaa Bassim "officially" informed the Ambassador that Egypt will join the Contact Group on Somali Piracy (CGSP). The Egyptian decision followed our demarche delivered on December 23 to Abdelhammed Marzouk, Deputy Assistant Minister for South and East Africa, and Egypt's point man on Somalia and piracy issues (reftel). We extended our appreciation to Egypt for its support of the counter-piracy contact group, and briefed Marzouk on the draft Statement of Principles and the proposed meeting agenda.

¶2. (C) Marzouk told us on December 28 that FM Aboul Gheit reviewed the Statement of Principles document, and believes it is "reasonable" and "clarifies the role of participants and the goals of the contact group." He told us that the Egyptian Embassy in Washington was instructed to seek some clarification on the definition of "region" in the document. Marzouk said that Egypt wanted to be certain that "region" applied only to the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden, as "there have been no acts of piracy in the Red Sea." He stated that this was a minor point, but clarification was important prior to CGSP meeting in January.

SCOBAY